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Sea Power

*Its Meaning to
the
United States of America*

REAR ADMIRAL MORTON L. DEYO, U.S.N.





“Were American Newcomen to do naught else, our work is well done if we succeed in sharing with America a strengthened inspiration to continue the struggle towards a nobler Civilization—through wider knowledge and understanding of the hopes, ambitions, and deeds of leaders in the past who have upheld Civilization’s material progress. As we look backward, let us look forward.”

—CHARLES PENROSE
*Senior Vice-President for North America
The Newcomen Society of England*



This statement, crystallizing a broad purpose of the Society, was first read at the Newcomen Meeting at New York World’s Fair on August 5, 1939, when American Newcomen were guests of The British Government

“Actorum Memores simul affectamus Agenda”

SEA POWER: *Its Meaning to the United States*



“Last October 21st was *the 150th Anniversary* of the best known and best beloved ship in the history of this Nation—the United States Frigate CONSTITUTION. A postage stamp was struck off in her honor; the Secretary of the Navy and Post Office officials spoke from the spar deck; throngs of people came on board to buy the stamps and to see her rugged and graceful beauty.”

—REAR ADMIRAL MORTON L. DEYO, U.S.N.



*Of salt water and the Sea,
Of stout ships and tall rigging,
Of white canvas and blue horizons,
—Of such are cherished heritages of
the United States Navy*

Sea Power

*Its Meaning to
the
United States of America*

REAR ADMIRAL MORTON L. DEYO, U.S.N.

MEMBER OF THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY OF ENGLAND

THE COMMANDANT
FIRST NAVAL DISTRICT
BOSTON



THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY OF ENGLAND
AMERICAN BRANCH NEW YORK

1948

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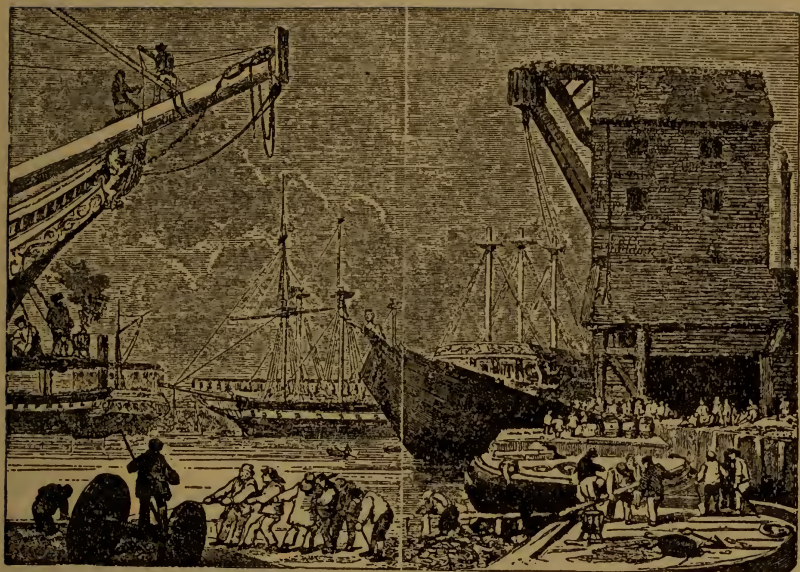


*This Newcomen Address, dealing with U.S.
Naval History and Traditions, was delivered
during the "1948 Boston Dinner" of The
Newcomen Society of England, at which Ad-
miral Deyo was guest of honor, held in the
Georgian Room at Hotel Statler,
Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.,
on March 25, 1948*



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“Three times, because of popular demand, the *Constitution* has been saved from an ignominious end on the scrap heap; three times rebuilt in the Boston Navy Yard at Charlestown: her home, when in port, for 147 years. Here she has come for rest and replenishment; for healing of the scars of her victorious battles.”

—REAR ADMIRAL MORTON L. DEYO, U.S.N.

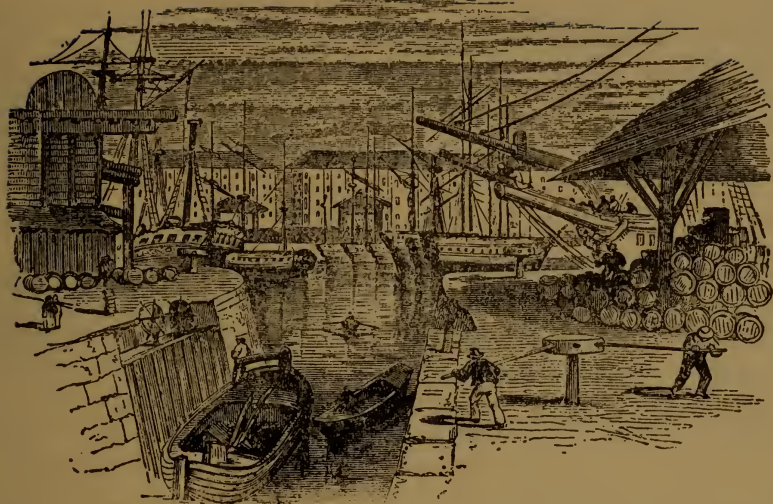


Biographical Sketch of The Author



Of the Sea, of Sea Power and its meaning to the American People—of these does REAR ADMIRAL MORTON L. DEYO, U.S.N., D.S.O., tell in a Newcomen Address of brilliant analysis of the lessons, both long-ago and present, which Naval History teaches. He writes with a strength that warrants national attention—as coming from a naval officer of long experience and high intelligence! Graduate of United States Naval Academy, at Annapolis, in Class of 1911, ADMIRAL DEYO now is The Commandant, First Naval District, with headquarters at Boston and Charlestown. Has served on Staff of Naval War College. Has served in Atlantic, European, Mediterranean, Far East, and Pacific waters, during two World Wars. Took part in Normandy invasion. Is recipient numerous honors from United States, Great Britain, and France. In his present post, along shores of the Massachusetts Bay, ADMIRAL DEYO finds himself close to the finest and most historic traditions of the United States Navy: in New England. From such colorful setting, he has written an unique interpretation of Sea Power: in its ever-important meaning to America. Naval officer, author, student of history, he is a member of the New England Committee, in The Newcomen Society of England.





My fellow members of Newcomen:

LAST OCTOBER 21ST was *the 150th Anniversary* of the best known and best beloved ship in the history of this Nation—the United States Frigate *CONSTITUTION*. A postage stamp was struck off in her honor; the Secretary of the Navy and Post Office officials spoke from the spar deck; throngs of people came on board to buy the stamps and to see her rugged but graceful beauty.

Three times, because of popular demand, she has been saved from an ignominious end on the scrap heap; three times rebuilt in the Boston Navy Yard at Charlestown: her home, when in port, *for 147 years*. Here she has come for rest and replenishment; for healing of the scars of her victorious battles.



Man in his materialism longs for something tangible to symbolize his spiritual thoughts. The very name "*Constitution*" has its own particular appeal. To Americans it stands for the ideals of a free people. There are few good Americans who do not feel that our Constitution is the instrument which protects them from the abuses and unequal treatment of the less fortunate peoples of the world. The ship bearing the name "*Constitution*" was always suc-

cessful. Even when forced to retreat in the face of overwhelming odds, she was resourceful, aggressive, and seized the initiative. Her victories were clean cut, sportsmanlike, decisive. Americans like success and they like sportsmanship. Lastly, that beautiful old ship symbolizes the romance of the sea, the adventurous days of our resolute forefathers.



Tonight, *Mr. Chairman*, I propose to review very briefly certain phases of U.S. Naval History, both past and present; and then seek to draw conclusions as to *the meaning* of Sea Power to the United States of America.

First, let us go back to early beginnings:



Revolutionary Period

To the sea, many a colonial of New England turned for support; to fishing and trading. A hundred years before our war for independence, the colonists of Massachusetts had built over seven hundred vessels. These men had long ago discovered the wealth of raw materials at hand for the shipbuilding trades. They took the sea for granted. They did not think of Sea Power; they merely knew that they could carry goods better by sea than any other way. When a nation borders upon the sea, she must have free use of the sea. The more important the routes or, in war, the greater the strategic necessity for using certain routes, the greater responsibility there is to assure that there is a Navy adequate to keep them open.



Sea Power in the 18th Century

The great world-struggles of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries were largely a fight for sea power. England indeed was late in entering the contest. She had enviously watched the opening of the rich new world by the great captains of Spain and Portugal until Drake and Raleigh and Morgan and the breed which their example produced had embarked her upon a great sweep of conquest. Then the English learned where the rich prizes overseas were to be found. Trade followed the flag and the flag

flew from great numbers of ships—half merchant, half man-of-war—supported by fleets or squadrons of ships-of-the-line, frigates, and sloops. They built an empire of trade extending around the world.



In the Seven Years War, England obtained world leadership upon the seas. To demonstrate it she wrested Canada from France after the French Navy had been reduced to impotence. Fortunately for France her minister, the Duc de Choiseul, knew that without a Navy the rich plums of the West Indies and the jewels of India would be lost forever. Being an expert in propaganda, he raised a great popular outcry and started prodigious activity for restoring the French Navy. By the beginning of our Revolution, the French again had become powerful upon the sea and were indeed superior to the English in respect to the design of ships, the education of officers, and in training in gunnery.

It was not until 1778, that France actually resumed her old war against England, as an ally of the Colonies, but her entrance had long been expected and this gave George III a problem to daunt any monarch. The Colonies had begun to show a worrisome fighting spirit under Washington, their great commander. At home the French had even threatened invasion; the British line of communications was clear across the broad and angry Atlantic and she was put to it to hold together her new empire of trade, which extended to far off India and the East Indies. Never had control of the sea been so important to England; never was she more vulnerable and over-extended.



Thus the untrained efforts of the Americans at sea during the War for Independence assumed an importance out of all proportion. Without any Navy, the uncoordinated attacks of many miscellaneous craft, chiefly privateers, manned by defiant and pugnacious men, had an increasingly significant effect.



The beginnings of our Navy were not impressive. Lack of leadership and organization worked against the excellent performance

of some of the captains. The rugged individualists of the day preferred privateering to the regular service. If they had to take risks, they wanted their chance of making a haul. They were an unruly lot, but they served the purpose of making the English quite unhappy.

Had it not been for the deadly struggle for World Power and for the fleets of d'Estaing and de Grasse, the Americans would not have gained their independence; at least not then.

The last gun of our Revolution had hardly been fired when our Army and Navy, such as they were, melted away. But as soon as the war ended, our sea trade increased by leaps and bounds.



It is not, then, surprising that many of our merchantmen in the Mediterranean soon became victims of the savage Barbary Pirates and that their crews were enslaved. This ignominy was suffered unchecked for nearly a decade until in 1794, when against great opposition Congress authorized the building of six frigates. Of these the CONSTITUTION was one.

Meanwhile, England and France, having by no means settled their difficulties and fighting unofficially when not actually at war, had been feeling the serious pinch of man power. The defenseless United States of America was a tempting plum for nations in their position. It can safely be said that our quasi-war with France, from 1798-1801, the War of 1812 with England, and the years of trouble and shame with the Corsairs of Tripoli, all occurred because we would not face the necessity for giving naval protection to our helpless merchantmen. The lesson of the Revolution had not been learned. We wanted to be peaceful traders. What a pity that the world always produces a bad wolf when the sheep graze unprotected!



President John Adams more than any other may be called the Father of our Navy. Finally able to rouse Congress after the French had raided our ships right in our own ports and had inflicted losses of approximately twenty-five million dollars upon our trade, Adams launched a new Navy. Remembering the dismal

experience of the Revolution, he was determined that the crews who manned the new ships must command the respect of the world. To induce them to enlist, he offered higher pay than that of merchant seamen or shore mechanics. He saw that better food and accommodations were provided. For the Captains he selected men of substance and character. Some had merchant ship experience but all were carefully chosen. He agreed with John Paul Jones, who had written: "It is by no means enough that an officer of the Navy should be a capable mariner. He should be as well a gentleman of liberal education, refined manners, punctilious courtesy, and the nicest sense of personal honor." We could do worse today than to take a leaf from the book of John Adams and John Paul Jones.



Here, then, at the end of the Eighteenth Century, were men like Edward Preble of Maine, to become perhaps the greatest leader of all, and already blooded in the Revolution; Thomas Truxton, a privateersman of the Revolution but a great disciplinarian and organizer, a roaring leader and a student; young Isaac Hull, Stephen and James Decatur, Bainbridge, Stewart, Rodgers, Porter, Shaw. Here were men to lead; all aggressive, proud, educated—men and leaders. Their names still ring in our ears. At last, a Navy was born with spirit, purpose, and standards.



I have said that French privateers had inflicted losses of some \$25,000,000 upon our trade. When we finally decided to put a stop to this, we spent \$6,000,000 on fighting ships in the three years after 1798. But during that period our sea trade reached a value of \$200,000,000, of which one-half was in the West Indies. Probably 74 percent of this would have been lost (not to mention the ships themselves and their crews) had it not been for our small but active Navy and privateers. The \$6,000,000, though it came late, was a pretty good insurance investment.



In New England, the ill-starred Embargo of 1807 and the war with England in 1812 were so unpopular that there was a great deal of talk about secession. This was natural, for at that time the

merchant tonnage of Massachusetts was about twice that of any other State; her foreign tonnage was 37 percent of our total; her coastal trade was greatest, and her fishing fleet comprised about 87 percent of the national total. Trade was flourishing to Russia, to California, and the Northwest, to China. It is said that one brig, the CATHERINE of Boston, of 281 tons, costing \$7000, cleared \$115,000 in one voyage to Russia in 1809.



The Navy too was finding itself and in the War of 1812, though small, it performed with great gallantry and established its best traditions. In the frigate actions so well known to us all, our gunnery, seamanship, and training were the amazement of the Royal Navy. The actions on the Lakes under Chauncey, Perry, and MacDonough actually broke up two overland invasions from the North and in fact opened the West.



By 1814, even after Napoleon was defeated and rotting on St. Helena, the great Wellington saw nothing to be gained by prolonging the war in America. The British were willing to call it quits.

So the gallant CONSTITUTION and her sisters, covered with glory and scars, returned home in 1815; and went out of commission.



With balance of power reestablished in the world after the Napoleonic Wars, a golden age of peace was ushered in. Then indeed the Yankee navigators came into their own, and their house flags were seen in all ports of the world. This fantastic age of sailing traders was climaxed in the beautiful clippers, the most romantic and dashing trading vessels of all time. One of them, the famous DREADNAUGHT, crossed from New York to Queenstown in nine days, seventeen hours.

I have attempted to give some idea of the significance of the sea in the early struggles of this Nation; how it was the boundless highway as well as our great protector; how, because of the titanic struggle for power by the European giants, our own small efforts

plus geography assumed an importance sufficient to preserve for us our freedom and grant us time to grow strong.



Beginning of Modern Times

The vast enterprise of opening up this land of untold riches turned the thoughts of our citizens inward, and most of them have never turned to sea again. The isolationism of the Middle West, the protection of infant industries, are easy to understand. Thus when, after the War with Spain in 1898, Mr. America found that his country had for some unknown reason acquired island possessions almost as far away as China, he felt uncomfortable and ill at ease. He was no imperialist. He wanted to turn them loose as soon as possible and said it was none of our business.

He didn't understand that these islands which had come to us were deposits left by a melted glacier—the old Empire of Spain. Empires are indeed like glaciers. Ponderously they gather and carve and regroup and change the aspect of the earth. But eventually they melt. Then we become aware of small, new unattached bits of land. They cannot support themselves, they haven't been taught how to do so by the master. So some other glacier may gobble them up—or possibly they may survive alone, or may attach themselves to other bits of land. Every time an Empire melts away, there is a regrouping of peoples, and blood is spilled.

Was it better that the old Spanish islands should be seized by the rapidly forming Japanese glacier, or that we should let them stay with us, to be bewildered by democracy? Mr. America didn't think much about that, but he has had his answer in the Second World War.



At any rate, our responsibilities suddenly extended far overseas. We were in a position to achieve great potential military power by establishing Bases on these islands or to experience serious actual weakness by leaving them defenseless. We chose the latter course, or rather we took it because, as usual, we would not believe that the wolf would bite the sheep.

When the First World War came, we still were looking inward and did not see our growing shadow on the face of the globe. Perhaps that was because ever since the War of 1812, with a few exceptions, British policy had been generally in support of ours. We had not been a part of international and imperial ambitions and had taken Great Britain for granted. The Balance of Power did not seem to concern us.

Americans did learn something about the bearing which Sea Power had upon the course of the First World War. Again the stormy Atlantic became the line of communications, but this time the direction of flow was reversed and stretched from America to Britain and to France. 135 years after we had won freedom from the greatest empire of modern times, we were to save her, plus our old French ally, from sure defeat by sending them an endless stream of beans, butter, and bullets, plus 3,000,000 green but cocksure citizens in uniform, who again learned the hard way to fight and proved to be the decisive military force in France at the end.



The men, beans, and bullets reached their destination because the great German Fleet, after a gruelling struggle of three years, was largely bottled up in their North Sea bases by the far superior British Navy. But the Germans had gone underwater and developed a deadly commerce destroyer in the submarine. It was touch and go whether this weapon would win the war by shutting off our markets from the Allies. It took us three years to make up our minds. Then we decided that we were not "too proud to fight." Finally, with the general adoption of convoys, the growing skill of our anti-submarine units, the prodigious shipbuilding and destroyer construction activities in which New England played so prominent a part, the tide turned slowly in our favor. We were in the war only a year and a half, and the great lesson of Sea Power was again concealed from much of our citizenry in spite of its obviously vital significance.

Many other lessons were not learned. We refused to understand that, having emerged from that war as immeasurably the most powerful nation of the world, we must assume the responsibility which our wealth and achievements imposed upon us. We pre-

ferred to give money away rather than accept the principle of healthy two-way trade with Europe.

We washed our hands of a sick Europe and permitted despair to give birth to Hitler. We wanted to mind our own business and couldn't be too concerned with Japan's quaint experiments in which she feverishly boasted of superhuman industrial growth and the modern state on the one hand, while on the other her soldiers scowled into mental mirrors which made them look seven feet tall, and shouted feudalistic legends of their war gods until they simply had to fight somebody or burst. History will place at our door some blame for the advent of the Second World War.



That war is still fresh in our memories and I wish only to touch upon certain aspects which seem to be appropriate to this informal study.

Again we were woefully unready, but the Japanese did us the favor of hitting hard below the belt and that gets Americans together better than anything. They expected that we would never find the spirit or the means to take the war so far overseas as to threaten their newly seized riches. Across the other ocean, Hitler, convinced of the adequacy of his armies to the task of subduing Europe, persuaded by his Reichsmarshal that the Luftwaffe not only could bomb England out of existence but sink any ships which might be troublesome, decided that the United States of America would not be a factor.

So much for the propensity of totalitarian governments to underrate their opponents.



In this war the airplane was, as had been expected, the most powerful long-range striking weapon. But its success depended upon its intelligent use in conjunction with other weapons. It was very vulnerable and costly; required expert care; could operate only from specially prepared bases; and its effective full load range was comparatively small, so that operating bases had to be established relatively close to the enemy objectives. In planning for the use of weapons, we must evaluate their limitations as well as their capabilities.

In England, which had so magnificently held out until our arrival, we found the necessary sites for bases plus a lot of assistance. In North Africa and Italy, we built more fields after fighting for them with troops who had been brought by the Navy three or four thousand miles overseas. With the British Navy and the Allied Air Forces superior to the enemy in the Channel, the Germans still relied upon the submarine as their unsupported naval weapon. This was not what the German Navy wanted, but their voice had seldom been listened to in the higher councils of the Nazis.



In the Pacific, the rise and fall of Japanese Naval Power was the index of the military position of Japan. Their plan was based upon perimeter defense supported by their carrier task forces. Our victories at Midway and in the Solomons did the Japanese irreparable injury because they were never able to train replacements for losses in fighting ships. Their second team was not in the same class with their first. Their shore-based air strength, so valuable when supplied and supplemented by the Fleet, was incapable of carrying on alone; and their troops, when not supported by sea, could be starved or overwhelmed. Never has strategy been more soundly or boldly planned than by our Joint Chiefs of Staff. The problem of geography was stupendous, but the unbelievable productive capacity of our industry was equal to the work of supplying the countless tons of equipment without which the task could never have been attempted.

As General Marshall said in his final report: "Oceans are formidable barriers, but for the nations enjoying naval superiority they become highroads of invasion."



The Southern Pacific advance was long and slow, requiring the close coordination of all arms. The Central Pacific, with its tremendous distances and small defended islands was ideal for the amphibious advance, which was spearheaded by the Carrier Task Forces that were capable, when all the groups were together, of launching repeated strikes with 1000 planes. Never had such a beautifully balanced Fleet seemed possible before this war. It was

constantly moving at high speed for months at a time, replenishing at sea on the move from special supply squadrons.



Meanwhile, the Japanese fleet of cargo ships, drawing life blood from the southern occupied areas, were being sunk with deadly regularity by our submarines, whose bag for the war was 59 percent of the total merchant marine of Nippon.

At length, after three long years, after the bloody battles of the Marianas, of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, the air bases were ready for the final blow against Japan. By that time, Japanese Sea Power was destroyed and their Air Power already turned to the despair of Kamikaze attacks. Then the B-29's, flying steadily and in great numbers, destroyed with incendiary bombs the tinder cities of the home islands, and brought the horror of war to every man, woman, and child of Japan.



The vastness and flexibility of our effort in the Pacific, in which all Services worked together in true harmony, has never been approached in the history of Man. It was the result of sound leadership, great intellectual balance, extremely high quality of citizenry, and a virility which reflects the greatness of a nation which in those years came truly to full stature.



This Newcomen Address does not attempt to deal with the causes of war, but is concerned with the uses of the seas in wartime.

If we must keep on fighting wars, and I suppose we shall as long as there are bad wolves loose among the sheep, then it seems highly preferable for us to continue the commendable practice of fighting them in the enemy's country rather than our own; to discourage our enemies by making it more difficult and dangerous for them to project their efforts across the seas than for us to do so. This lesson we learned from the British, and fortunately, in our last three wars, have had them on our side. It was not until the Second World War that we took the lead at sea, and the British have by no means resented this change of position.

If I may digress a moment, some people like to say that armaments make wars and that disarmament is the cure for wars. Nothing could be a better illustration of the fallacy of that theory than the present situation as compared with the end of the First World War. At that time, the British were much concerned about our predominant Naval position resulting from the war building program. They didn't know what we might be up to and, on general and traditional principles, wanted no serious rival on the seas. The depressing limitation of armaments conferences in the 'twenties and 'thirties bear witness that disarmament by mutual agreement is futile when the parties to the agreement suspect each other's intentions. Today, the whole British Commonwealth would applaud any increase in our naval or military strength, simply because they are convinced that we would not be at all likely to use it against them. It is not guns but men's minds, that bring on wars.



The lessons so hardly learned by Americans through 170 years of experience will be applicable to our needs so long as the seas continue to be the great highways for carrying goods, in peace and war, to and from the Western Hemisphere. Methods and weapons change; wars become more complex as Civilization increases in complexity. Unhappily, we no longer are a great maritime nation. In two wars, we have had to start almost from scratch to build vast quantities of ships which, being built hastily, were not what we wanted after the war. This is cruelly wasteful. We may not again have the luxury of time or materials to do this.



More than ever we must be alert, watchful, and resolute: to assure that the means are at hand, the men in readiness to meet, with decision and firmness, all present and future *threats of world domination from across the seas.*

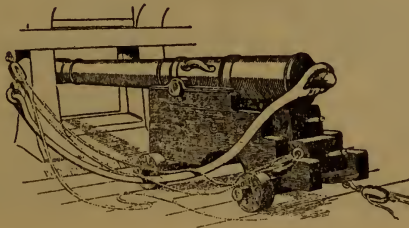
THE END



"Actorum Memores simul affectamus Agenda!"



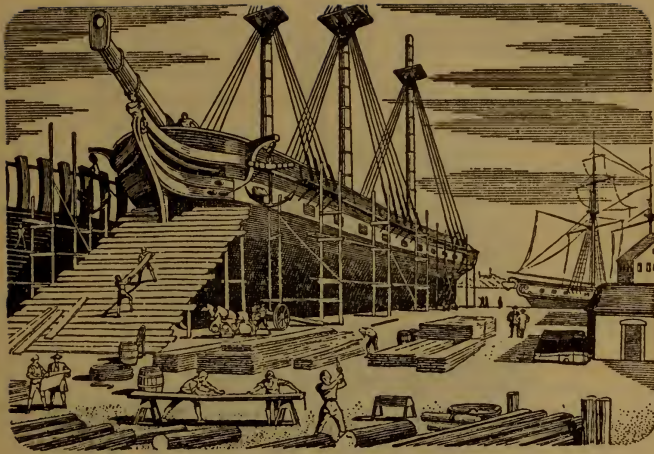
THIS NEWCOMEN ADDRESS was delivered during the "1948 Massachusetts Dinner" of The Newcomen Society of England, held in Georgian Room of Hotel Statler at Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A., on March 25, 1948. ADMIRAL DEYO, the guest of honor, was introduced by VICE ADMIRAL HAROLD G. BOWEN, U.S.N. (Ret.), D.S.M., M.A., D.Sc., formerly the Engineer-in-Chief of the United States Navy, Chairman of the Washington Committee, in The Newcomen Society of England. The dinner was presided over by DR. KARL T. COMPTON, President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge; the Chairman of the New England Committee, in American Newcomen.





“Early in 1845, the *U.S. Frigate CONSTITUTION*, commanded by Captain John Percival, U.S.N., cast anchor in the roadstead of Singapore, being on service in the East Indies and Pacific. The vertical rays of a tropic sun and the deadly breezes of the African coast had made a hospital of the ship; her gun-deck on the star-board side was hung with cots and hammocks. The captain had given up the forward cabin to the sick.

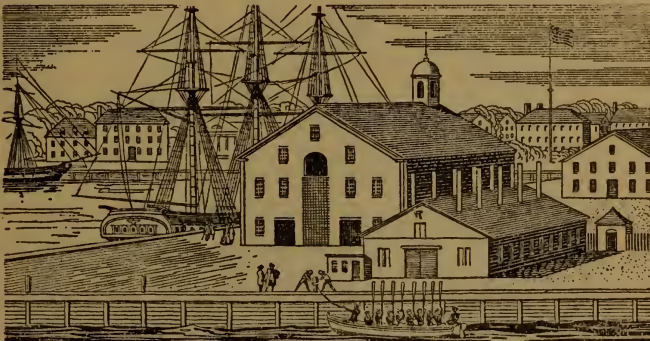
“Before the anchor was let go, a boat with an officer from *H.B.M. Frigate CAMBRIAN* came alongside with friendly offers of Commodore Chads, Royal Navy. The Commodore and his ship’s surgeon, familiar with the diseases of India, rendered every aid. The Commodore had fought the *CONSTITUTION*, in 1813, in the action of

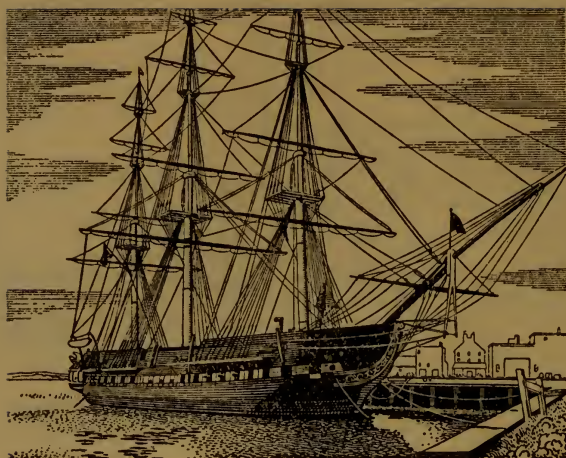


the *Java*; had hauled down his colours to her; and considered her
an old friend.”

—“*Old Landmarks of Middlesex*”

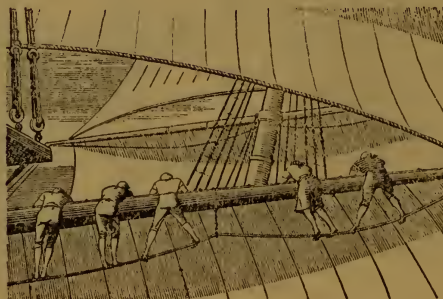
SAMUEL ADAMS DRAKE *Boston: 1873*





At the great Festival, *in Faneuil Hall at Boston*, given to CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL, *U.S. Navy*, upon his return from the fight with the *Guerriere*, JOHN ADAMS (1735-1826), *second* President of the United States, caused *this Toast* to be proposed:

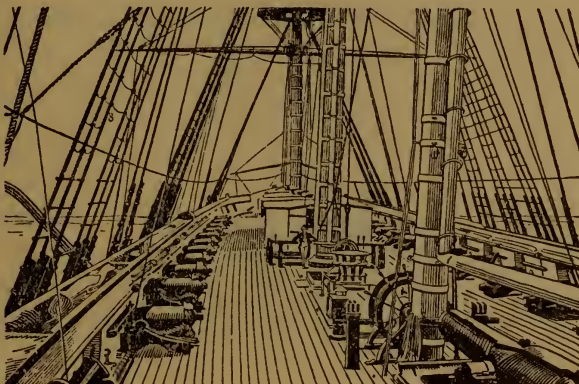
“Talbot, Truxton, Decatur, Little, Preble,—had their Country given them the means, they would have been Blakes, Drakes, and Nelsons.”

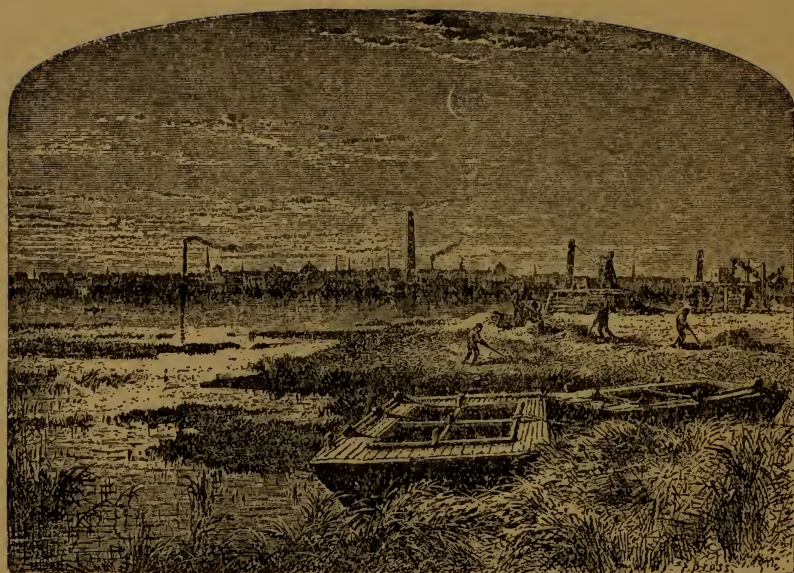




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—REAR ADMIRAL MORTON L. DEYO, U.S.N.





THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY OF ENGLAND IN NORTH AMERICA

BROADLY, *this British Society has as its purposes: to increase an appreciation of American-British traditions and ideals in the Arts and Sciences, especially in that bond of sympathy for the cultural and spiritual forces which are common to the two countries; and, secondly, to serve as another link in the intimately friendly relations existing between Great Britain and the United States of America.*

The Newcomen Society centers its work in the history of Material Civilization, the history of: Industry, Invention, Engineering, Transportation, the Utilities, Communication, Mining, Agriculture, Finance, Banking, Economics, Education, and the Law—these and correlated historical fields. In short, the background of those factors which have contributed or are contributing to the progress of Mankind.

The best of British traditions, British scholarship, and British ideals stand back of this honorary society, whose headquarters are at London. Its name perpetuates the life and work of Thomas Newcomen (1663-1729), the British pioneer, whose valuable contributions in improvements to the newly invented Steam Engine brought him lasting fame in the field of the Mechanic Arts. The Newcomen Engines, whose period of use was from 1712 to 1775, paved a way for the Industrial Revolution. Newcomen's inventive genius preceded by more than 50 years the brilliant work in Steam by the world-famous James Watt.



*“The roads you travel so briskly
lead out of dim antiquity,
and you study the past chiefly because
of its bearing on the living present
and its promise for the future.”*

—LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES G. HARBORD,
K.C.M.G., D.S.M., LL.D., U.S. ARMY (RET.)

(1866-1947)

*Late American Member of Council at London
The Newcomen Society of England*





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